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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
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RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//JF/UNMA//
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J3//
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFIUU/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2282
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2489
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5617
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1123

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000865

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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STATE FOR SA/FO (AMB MQUINN), SA/A, S/CR, SA/PAB,
S/CT, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN, KAMEND
OSD FOR BREZINSKI
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD
REL NATO/AUST/NZ/ISAF

E.O. 12958 N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: PRT/KABUL - AFGHANS REACTION TO LONDON
CONFERENCE CAUTIOUSLY POSITIVE

Ref: (A) Kabul 000424 (B) Kabul 000526

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: Reaction in Afghanistan to the London Conference has been largely positive, with a surprisingly high percentage of the population having heard of the results and impressed with the USD10.5 billion in pledges. Significant skepticism remains, however, on the part of Afghans who doubt they will benefit individually from this aid, and it will take appropriate follow through on the part of the international community to allay these doubts. End Summary.

International/Local Media Coverage

¶2. (SBU) International media, including APTN, Reuters, BBC, CNN, NBC, CBS, New York Times, Washington Post, had full scale live coverage of the conference. Most local TV and radio stations accompanied President Hamid Karzai and had live coverage of the conference. Those that did not accompany also gave extensive coverage. As a result, virtually 80 to 90% of Afghans know about the London Conference, the outcomes, and particularly the donation amounts. An Afghan USAID Information Specialist (Afghan) personally heard people remarking that "We didn't know the amount of

donations after the Tokyo and Berlin meetings, but this time almost every single Afghan knows how much money was donated for Afghanistan in the London Conference."

Expectations/mentality:Kabul

13. (SBU) The USD10.5 billion was clearly beyond local expectations. Local radio and TV "man-on-the-street" interviews indicated that 50 to 60% of the people seem satisfied and happy with the results. While pleased at the level of international commitments, the majority think that this USD10.5 billion USD will be spent in a similar manner as the Tokyo and Berlin donations were spent. They expressed dissatisfaction with that process, which they regard as having focused on the construction of buildings in urban areas and on NGO's, and not fully addressing the systemic issues related to the country's economic infrastructure. They tend to have little expectation that they will see major changes with respect to their own lives in the areas of security, corruption, and unemployment as a result of London. They frequently wonder why the GoA does not build factories, dams, hydro-power, and other large-scale facilities that they believe would reduce the high unemployment rate.

In the Countryside

14. (SBU) When we requested comments from AID and State officers stationed in the provinces, we

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heard many of the same themes. Local radio and television (limited to only the larger cities) had extensive coverage of London, especially of President Karzai's speech, and a high percentage of locals are aware of the general outcomes. However, governors and other local officials only mentioned it when prompted, and their reactions, while positive, were guarded. There was some optimism about the Aid Effectiveness discussions in London that would, they believed, funnel more money through the GoA, and that they hoped would bring more funding and projects to the countryside, to their villages and to them individually. There was also general distrust of NGOs and their projects, and a wait-and-see attitude toward how the new pledges would play out.

15. (SBU) Comment: There is a general sense throughout the country that Afghans are nervous and/or afraid about their future. Many trust neither the GoA nor NGOs. This is understandable; despite the significant funds already invested in Afghanistan, the abysmal state of the infrastructure after 27 years of conflict, the logistical difficulties of doing programs in the provinces, and the continuing insurgency have meant that what assistance has been delivered has been spread thinly. Ten plus billion dollars, spent wisely, should help to allay some of this skepticism. This will be our focus as we work to implement the Afghanistan Compact. End comment.

16. (U) Dushanbe minimize considered.

NEUMANN